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USDA Inside USDA Information

United States Department
of Agriculture

Office of Governmental
and Public Affairs

Washington D.C.
20250

Vol. 2

No. 6

December 14, 1979

ITEMS THIS WEEK

Demonstration of ENG equipment...the 1979 Yearbook...that bio-energy exposition...newsletters, announcements, visits and comments...plus a couple of "outside" job possibilities. Yep, there's more, so keep readin'.

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HOLD IT! YOU'RE ON MINICAM, MAYBE

Agency inf directors got to look at a new toy this week, although "toy" is hardly the word, when GPA's Buddy Renfro and crew and Larry Quinn demonstrated new electronic news gathering equipment.

For you non-electronic types, that's sometimes called ENG equipment or minicam equipment. That means one person--if muscular--but preferably two can carry a videotape camera and a recorder almost anywhere to shoot broadcast quality tape.

Cap 2

Already the crews have made 2-3 public service spots on soil erosion problems and a news feature on the same subject with the new equipment. Station acceptability of the new format--packaged in 3/4" cassettes--has been favorable.

While we won't stop use of film entirely, the new equipment--plus some basic editing facilities--will speed up production on much television news coverage previously handled by film alone. Scheduling of the equipment already has jammed into a need for more hours per day.

At the demonstration, all inf folks who came to the weekly meeting were taped as they entered the meeting room. Later, the crew showed how they could edit unwanted nose-scratching, sounds and so forth in order to make a long take shorter and to the point.

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HEAR IT OR FEEL IT

Frank Samay and Ed Poe, both of publications in GPA, met the other day with folks at the Library of Congress to see about making some of USDA's publications available to the blind.

The Library has a unit that maintains an extensive collection of braille and recorded books and magazines...it also loans these items through cooperating libraries and directly to subscribers.

To get USDA publications in the program means that about 50-100 will be reviewed. If accepted they'll be placed in braille and on recorded discs and cassettes. Pubs will be selected on the basis of their appeal to a wide range of interest and frequency of revision.

According to the LC, last year 639,000 adults and children used those kinds of materials...including 21,000 braille readers and 618,000 who listened to the recordings.

Interestingly the program offers about 70 magazines and newspapers to blind readers. Congress funds the program to the tune of \$34 million (in 1979) and the combined federal, state and local expenditure in 1978 was more than \$41 million.

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JUST A LITTLE
LONGER...

This is almost one of those items about which we were afraid to ask...where is the 1979 Yearbook of Agriculture? Well, it's this way, folks....

The new book will be off the press in a few weeks. We have seen the proofs and must brag that the book will be a lulu. When you see all that color you'll say it was worth the wait. It's a children's food book...and there will be a special marketing effort to get more copies than usual to food editors, consumer writers, key educators and others. More later....

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NEW USDA COMING

Along about May you should be receiving the new "USDA"...but who knows if the name will stay the same. Format won't, that's for sure.

Milt Sloane and Sharon Edwards, with others in GPA's Special Reports Division, are busily planning and overhauling mailing lists, doping out formats and gearing up for the new job. It will be a magazine, published 10 times yearly, probably about 16-24 pages each issue.

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AND IN APRIL...

You'll also be seeing more about the exposition planned for April 21-24 in Atlanta called "Bio-Energy '80." It will be a show to talk about solar energy stored in plant matter through photosynthesis (in fact, that's a definition of bio-energy).

The show is being billed as a "world congress and exposition," and both commercial and governmental interests are involved.

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MORE ABOUT
"CRISIS..."

We think we told you about "Crisis in Yankee Agriculture," the 28-min., 16mm color film on the loss of farms in urban areas. It was made for the Massachusetts Dept. of Food and Agriculture but purposefully was made general enough to cover the problems of agriculture in any area where urban development and farmers compete for the land.

Now we have learned you can get copies from Cambridge Media Resources, 36 Shepard St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138, (617) 491-1743. Preview prints are available only to organizations that intend to buy (cost is \$325). If you want to buy after renting the film (rental is \$35), you can deduct the rental cost from the purchase price. You can also get the story on a video cassette for \$300.

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WE GET LETTERS... From here and there we get all sorts of reports...some official, some may be just rumors. Here are a few:

KINGDON TO ARIZONA Lorraine Kingdon is moving from Washington State U. to the University of Arizona where she will head ag inf, starting Jan. 1. (All attempts to verify this have met negative results, but take it from "Inside..." it must be true!)

A TEA FOR GRAHAM Rollie Graham, U. of Nebraska, will be retiring this month. He has been at UN for 32 years, serving as head of ag comm for the past 16 years. On the 20th...next week...his department will host a retirement tea. Time is 2:30 to 4 p.m. in the East Campus Union. Betcha they'll let you in if you show up.

TEHO HITS MAINLAND Fortunato "Lucky" Teho, U. of Hawaii specialist emeritus in radio and television, has just returned from a 2-week trip to the West Coast. He visited Larry Kirk of the U. of Nevada. Lucky's also working on a second garden book...will be published in early 1980.

GREEN GRASS OF WYO. Herb Pownall, U. of Wyoming, says his outfit now holds an Extension Service Communications Shortcourse in lieu of the old annual conference. Despite the storm that almost sealed off SE Wyoming a couple of weeks ago, attendees came from every county but one for the weeklong short course. He wrote: "There's grass roots interest in hands-on experience in newsletter writing, photography, radio, television, information and time management." (Does "grass roots" mean agents, local leaders, farmers, ranchers?)

ANOTHER NEWSLETTER Copy #2 of Vol. 1--a newsletter from Pennsylvania State U. called "The Ag Communications Express"--arrived last week. It had items on fog index responses, ordering publications, planning stories, radio, and visuals. One item noted a "National Mimicry Week."

BEHIND THE BAR FACTS Don Schwartz, from North Dakota State U., now with SEA-CR as an IPA (Intergov'tl Personnel Act), sent us his favorite headline: "Dan Dillon Hangs Around Bars." It was a head a local paper put on a feature that Don's sports inf director did on a title winning gymnast. His specialty: parallel bars.

MUST BE SILLY SEASON Al Bond, retiree from Washington State U., sent us a number of suggestions for the new name of "USDA." One went: "Since K. Robert Kern is temporarily in your midst...a likely choice might be 'The Kernal.'"

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PLANNING GROUP TO MEET More seriously...speaking of Kern, he's called a session of the NPAC II project planning group for Jan. 14-15 here in Washington. The group will talk about Bob's findings so far, make some decisions about the proposal, figure out some strategies, set some priorities...and maybe more.

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NEW SEA STAFFER New Science and Education inf staff member come Dec. 31 will be Maureen Quinn...recently a speech writer with the Dept. of Labor. Maureen worked in the Agricultural Marketing Service for a time.

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JOB HUNTING...TRY
THESE

If you want to manage a large agency-conducted program, send your resume and salary history to the National Ag Chemicals Assoc., 1625 Eye St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 (no telephone contacts).

Then the National FFA Foundation, with headquarters in Madison, Wis., is looking for an assistant executive director beginning July 1, 1980. Applicants should be knowledgeable and experienced in Vo-Ag and FFA. Closing date for applications is Dec. 31. Contact FFA Foundation Search Committee, c/o D.N. McDowell, Consultant, P.O. Box 5117, Madison 53705, (608) 238-4222.

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DOUBLE-DASH IT!

We've been correctly charged with neglecting accuracy. Seems that twice, "Inside..." referred to a Vernon Burdette of the Southern Region of SEA. We were wrong...should have been VERNON BOURDETTE. (Even if we don't always make it, we still like to spell names right...so sorry, Vernon.)

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AN ESSAY CONTEST FOR
STUDENTS

The School of Communications of Howard U. in Washington, D.C. is holding its 9th Annual Communications Conference Feb. 15-18. In order to encourage attendance, college students with an interest in communications are encouraged to enter an essay contest--winners (the top three) will have various costs paid to the conference and will be honored at a luncheon where they'll also get an award.

U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY

If you know of students interested, have them write to Mrs. Peggy D. Pinn, Conference Coordinator, 9th Annual Communications Conference, Howard U., Washington 20059. Subject of essays should be on "Communications: An Agent for Social Change."

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A COUPLE OF AWARDS

"Inside..." just received word from Buddy Renfro, GPA, that two films, "Gusts of Power" and "Habitat--A Special Place"--have received awards from the 9th International Festival on Agricultural and Rural Themes at Lisbon, Portugal.

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GO, PINK!

The mystery of "Inside's..." pink paper supply got pretty deep, but maybe we've found a partial answer.

Stan Prochaska, GPA's acting press chief, says two press releases recently went out on mailing lists on pink paper. (Wonder if the newspapers who got them used them?)

"Inside Information" is published by the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs for information officers and specialists in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State Departments of Agriculture, and the Land-Grant Universities. Send contributions to Hal R. Taylor, Deputy Director for Information, (202) 447-7903.